

**OPINION 2072 (Case 3143)*****Euphryne obesa* Baird, 1858 (currently *Sauromalus obesus*; Reptilia, Squamata): proposal to give the specific name precedence over that of *Sauromalus ater* Duméril, 1856 not approved**

**Abstract.** The Commission has ruled that the priority of the name *Sauromalus ater* Duméril, 1856 should be maintained. *Sauromalus ater* is the senior name for the chuckwalla (family IGUANIDAE) from the southwest of North America. A proposal had been made to give precedence to a junior subjective synonym *S. obesus* (Baird, 1858).

**Keywords.** Nomenclature; taxonomy; Reptilia; Squamata; IGUANIDAE; *Sauromalus ater*; *Sauromalus obesus*; chuckwallas; southwestern North America.

---

**Ruling**

- (1) The name *obesa* Baird, 1858 (specific name corrected under Article 34.2 of the Code), as published in the binomen *Euphryne obesus*, is not to be given priority over *Sauromalus ater* Duméril, 1856, as published in the binomen *Sauromalus ater*, whenever the two names are considered to be synonyms. The Principle of Priority is upheld and *S. ater* Duméril, 1856 has priority over *Euphryne obesa* Baird, 1858 whenever the two names are considered to be synonyms.
- (2) The name *Sauromalus* Duméril, 1856 (gender: masculine), type species by monotypy *Sauromalus ater* Duméril, 1856, is hereby placed on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology.
- (3) The following names are hereby placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology:
  - (a) *ater* Duméril, 1856, as published in the binomen *Sauromalus ater* (specific name of the type species of *Sauromalus* Duméril, 1856);
  - (b) *obesa* Baird, 1858, as published in the binomen *Euphryne obesus*.

**History of Case 3143**

An application to conserve the specific name of *Euphryne obesa* Baird, 1858 (specific name corrected to agree in gender with the feminine generic name under Article 34.2 of the Code) for the chuckwalla (family IGUANIDAE) from the southwest of North America by giving it precedence over its junior subjective synonym *Sauromalus ater* Duméril, 1856 was received from Richard R. Montanucci (Clemson University, South Carolina), Hobart M. Smith and David Chiszar (University of Colorado), Kraig Adler (Cornell University, Ithaca, New York), David L. Auth (University of Florida, Gainesville), Ralph W. Axtell (Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville), Ted J. Case (University of California at San Diego), Joseph T. Collins (The Center for North American Amphibians and Reptiles, Lawrence, Kansas), Roger Conant (Albuquerque, New Mexico), Robert Murphy (Royal Ontario Museum, Ontario, Canada), Kenneth Petren (University of Cincinnati, Ohio) and Robert C. Stebbins (Kensington, California) on 10 September 1999. After correspondence the

case was published in BZN 58: 37–40 (March 2001). The title, abstract and keywords of the case were published on the Commission's website. Comments opposing the application were published in BZN 58: 307–308; BZN 59: 45–48 and 205. Comments in support of the application were published in BZN 58: 229; 307–308.

### Decision of the Commission

On 1 December 2002 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the proposals published in BZN 58: 39. At the close of the voting period on 1 March 2003 the votes were as follows: 12 Commissioners voted FOR the proposals, 12 Commissioners (Alonso-Zarazaga, Bouchet, Brothers, Calder, Halliday, Kraus, Lamas, Macpherson, Minelli, Patterson, Rosenberg and van Tol) voted AGAINST, no votes were received from Cogger, Dupuis and Mahnert. Ng was on leave of absence.

Voting against, Alonso-Zarazaga commented that stability is not better achieved by reversing priority. A junior name should not be given precedence because of preference by a particular school, or as a result of the publication capacity by a given set of researchers. Also voting against, Halliday commented that the case rests on two arguments. First, that there is uncertainty surrounding the type locality of *S. ater*. This is irrelevant to the nomenclatural issue. Second, it is argued that *S. obesus* should be preferred because it is used in a greater number of papers than *S. ater*. There is no Article in the Code that invites the use of this argument, nor do the authors invoke any particular Article to support their case. The nearest relevant Article would be 23.9.3, however, both *S. ater* and *S. obesus* have been in continuous use for over 100 years. Therefore, the Principle of Priority should be upheld and the proposals should be rejected.

### Original references

The following are the original references to the names placed on Official Lists by the ruling given in the present Opinion:

*ater*, *Sauromalus*, Duméril, 1856, *Archives du Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris*, **8**: 536.  
*obesa*, *Euphyne*, Baird, 1858, *Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, **10**: 253.

*Sauromalus* Duméril, 1856, *Archives du Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris*, **8**: 536.